



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

November 3, 2004

Ms. Angela M. DeLuca
Assistant City Attorney
City of College Station
P.O. Box 9960
College Station, Texas 77842-9960

OR2004-9377

Dear Ms. DeLuca:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 215424.

The City of College Station (the "city") received a request for "copies of any and all traffic accident reports pertaining to automobile accidents occurring in the vicinity of the intersection between 400 University Drive and FM 60 ... within the last five (5) years." You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.103, and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

While you raise both sections 552.103 and 552.108 as exceptions to the disclosure of the information at issue, you have offered no arguments in support of your assertion. Therefore, we cannot find that those exceptions apply to the information at hand. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302. You have, however, presented arguments in support of withholding the requested documents under section 552.101. Section 552.101 of the Public Information Act excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. The documents you seek to withhold are accident report forms that have been completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (officer's accident report). You claim that the accident reports are excepted from disclosure by section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. Section 550.065(b) states that except as provided by subsection (c), accident reports are privileged and confidential.

Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the release of accident reports to a person who provides two of the following three pieces of information: (1) date of the accident; (2) name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) specific location of the accident. Transp. Code § 550.065(c)(4). Under this provision, the Department of Public Safety or another governmental entity is required to release a copy of an accident report to a person who provides the agency with two or more pieces of information specified by the statute. *Id.* In the situation at hand, the requestor has not provided the city with two of the three pieces of information. Thus, you must withhold the requested accident reports under section 550.065(b) in conjunction with section 552.101 of the Public Information Act.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), ©). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda Crawford".

Amanda Crawford
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

AEC/sdk

Ref: ID# 215424

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Craig W. Carlson
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(w/o enclosures)